

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE



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Revenue Electronic Filings Hit 20,000 Mark

OLYMPIA, Wash., June 27, 2002— The number of businesses choosing to file their state excise taxes electronically passed the 20,000 mark this week, more than doubling the number filing electronically at the same time last year.

The Department of Revenue met the goal it set last year of achieving 20,000 electronic filers by June. More than 14 percent of monthly taxpayers now use Electronic Filing (ELF).

Those ranks include Frances Hinson, controller of SeaPort Petroleum in Seattle. “I try to tell everyone that it’s a great way to do your taxes,” she said. “It saves me hours every month and helps me avoid making mistakes.”

The free, Internet-based service is becoming the filing method of choice for hundreds of additional taxpayers each month, agreed Agency Director Will Rice. “One big attraction is it helps taxpayers get it right the first time by scanning the online return for errors or omissions before it is filed.”

By contrast, 13 percent of taxpayers filing old-fashioned paper returns commit errors that require a Department of Revenue examiner to contact the taxpayer to resolve the problem, he said. ELF saves both the state and taxpayer time that otherwise would be spent reworking erroneous returns.

State agencies must improve their efficiency by using the electronic age to handle paper tax returns, Rice said. The department expects to handle more than 200,000 fewer paper returns in the next fiscal year thanks to the growing number of ELF users.

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“We must work smarter and more efficiently,” Rice said. “ELF helps us direct more attention to ensuring that all businesses pay their fair share of taxes, and less time spent dealing with taxpayers who make honest mistakes on their tax returns.”

He noted that the number of ELF filers began to ramp up rapidly during the last quarter as the department completed enhancements to the system that now allow nearly every class of business to file electronically. Users have a choice of paying their taxes by electronic funds transfer, check or American Express or Discover credit card.

For more information on ELF, visit the Department of Revenue’s web site at <http://dor.wa.gov>.

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